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REPORT ON THE INTER-AGENCY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (IACC) ON THE REGIONAL AFRICAN SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Addis Ababa, (Ethiopia) 20 to 24 February 1986

BACKGROUND

1. It will be recalled that Africa's political leaders and decision makers in the field of communications have at various fora called for the provision of an efficient and well managed communications infrastructural facilities because they constitute an indispensable element in the efforts of African countries to improve the quality of life of their people and to physically integrate the continent. To achieve this objective, emphasis has been placed on the development of an Integrated Telecommunications network including a Regional African Satellite Communications System.

2. As a result of the expressed desire of African leaders to use satellite communications as a complement to the terrestrial network to promote integrated development of the continent, a number of organizations became involved in the conduct of a feasibility study project now known as the Regional African Satellite Communications System causing proliferation of studies. Subsequently, the attendant wastage of human material and financial resources was a great impetus for the establishment of the Inter-Agency Co-ordinating Committee which is composed of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Pan-African Telecommunications Union (PATU), the "Union des Radiodiffusions et Televisions Nationales d'Afrique" (URTNA), the "Union Africaine des Postes et Telecommunications" (UAPT), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the "African Civil Aviation Commission" (AFCAC) whose mandate was defined by the third meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning in resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res.83/26. The same resolution among others charged the IACC with the responsibility of integrating and harmonising all the on going studies into a single one as well as supervising and monitoring the implementation of the study.

3. The IACC should have presented a report on its activities to the fourth meeting of the African Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning which was held in Conakry, February 1984. Since the report could not be considered by the above Conference it was decided that an Extraordinary meeting of Experts of Transport, Communications and Planning be convened to consider the report of the IACC and take final decision on behalf of the Ministers.

4. Due to the difficulties encountered by the extraordinary meeting of experts held in Addis Ababa May 1984, and considering the importance of the project and the urgency to take a decision, the meeting requested the Chairman of the fourth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning to convene an extraordinary meeting of African Ministers of Telecommunications with a view to taking a final decision. Regretably, it was not possible to convene the extraordinary meeting.

5. The present report, in accordance with the Cairo Resolution ECA/UNTACDA/ Res.83/26 and in line with the directives of the extraordinary meeting of experts gives an account of the activities of IACC since the experts meeting in May 1984. Furthermore it puts forward proposalsand recommendations agreed upon within the IACC for the organization, financing and implementation of the feasibility study.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

6. During the period under review, the IACC held several meetings at which modalities, work breakdown and organizational structure for the implementation as well as financing of the feasibility study were discussed.

7. In the search for finance for the feasibility study, the IACC mandated ITU to make initial contact with financial institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors. These contacts led to the convening of a donor's conference at which offers, were made by ADB EEC, ITU, UNDP and UNESCO to finance the study.

8. After the donor's conference, which was held in Geneva, March 1985, IACC maintained contacts with EEC and ADB with a view to reaching mutually acceptable conditions for financing the study. In this connection, the IACC welcomed the offer by ADB and requested ITU to pursue its efforts to initiate action for the fulfilment of the necessary conditions laid down by ADB. This offer appeared to be in line with the objectives of the study, namely, the transfer of technology and the acquisition of skills by African experts, the maximisation of the use of African expertise and the compliance with the provisions of the Cairo resolution as well as the consideration of all options and alternatives relevant to the study.

9. With regard to the EEC's offer the Committee had some reservations about the conditions attached to the grant to finance the study. Despite several contacts between EEC and the IACC, conditions satisfactory to both parties could not be reached. However the channels for communications are kept open to continue further negotiations.

10. The IACC received a request from UNDP to become a member of the committee. Considering the role of the UNDP in the overall development process and its specific role in the realization of the Pan-African Telecommunications Network, the IACC recommends to the conference the admission of UNDP' as a member of the IACC.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

AUTHORITY FOR THE PROJECT

11. Since the Regional African Satellite Communication System is a project conceived by the governments of Africa, it will be executed by them at the national and regional level using their own manpower and resources as much as possible.

12. The supreme authority for the project is the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning assisted by an Interim Executive Committee (IEC) which is charged with the technical responsibility of following up the implementation of the project. In order to accomplish this task, at least two meetings of the Conference of Ministers preceeded by the meeting of the IEC should be foreseen during the execution period of the Feasibility Study project. The timing of the first meeting to consider an interim report would be fixed by the IACC depending on the progress of work. The second meeting would take place upon the submission of the draft final report with the object of examining the outcome of the study and taking the appropriate decisions for the implementation phase.

ROLE OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (IEC)

13. The Interim Executive Committee will consist of one representative from each African country participating in the project. The members of the IEC have, as a group, to define the activities of the projects, to study the various reports especially from the financial, technical, and economical points of view and submit recommendations to the Conference of Ministers. In order to accomplish such a task, they may wish to set up a restricted representative sub-committee charged with the follow-up of the progress of the project. Alternatively, they may wish to follow up the matter as a Committee of the Whole.

14. The IEC receives the report of the IACC and transmits same to the Conference of Ministers with its comments and recommendations for final decision.

Role of IACC

15. Resolution ECA/UNTACDA/83/Res.26 gives the IACC the following specific tasks:

> "Calls upon the Inter-Agency Co-ordinating Committee to finalise the Feasibility Study document as well as supervise and monitor the implementation of the study ...
>
> ... The IACC shall assign to competent organization clear and identifiable scope of work together with the necessary resources for its implementation..."

16. In order to accomplish the above responsibilities, the IACC has established the following structure:

a) Chairman and Vice Chairman
The OAU is the Chairman of the IACC while the ECA acts its Vice-Chairman.

b) Lead Agency
To ensure the co-ordination of the execution of the project, ITU, in close cooperation with ECA and PATU and in close consultation with UAPT, as requested to assume the leading role.

c) Technical Committee
The IACC in its 8th meeting (Addis Ababa, October 1984) decided to create a technical committee composed of PATU as chairman, ITU as co-ordinator secretary and ECA, UAPT and URTNA as members which will report to the IACC. The technical committee will have the following duties:

- Elaboration of proposals for a work programme, planning and programming of various activities to be undertaken in the study.

- Drawing up of proposals for detailed work breakdown and determining the estimated cost of each work breakdown component.

- Formulating of proposals for the assignments of tasks to agencies.

- Monitoring, supervising and controlling the implementation of the feasibility study project as regards to both technical and financial aspects including the management of project funds.

Proposals emanating from the technical committee as well as reports on its activities would be submitted to the IACC for decision and policy guidelines.

The technical committee would have the following officers: Chairman and Co-ordinator with the following responsibilities:

Chairman: convenes the technical committee; chairs the technical committee; and presents the report of the technical committee to the IACC.

Co-ordinator: Draws up: the draft definition of tasks and breakdown of activities; the draft planning and programming of activities; the draft cost estimates of various activities; the draft documents pertaining to allocation of resources.

Ensures: the follow-up and implementation of the directives of IACC; the supervision and control of activities; the analysis and integration of the various parts of the study.

Submits: for the consideration of the technical committee separate reports, on tasks assigned to him (see above). The technical committee will consider the report submitted to it by the co-ordinator and transmit it with its comments to the IACC for decision.

The description of the role of the co-ordinator was considered as incomplete and additional duties might be added when the question of disbursement of funds are settled.

d) Financial Sub-Committee

A financial sub-committee was established as a result of a decision taken by the 5th IACC meeting. The financial sub-committee is composed of ECA, ADB, PATU, UAPT, URTNA and ITU, the ADB being the financial advisor of the IACC.

The full IACC should meet on a 6 monthly basis. It should also hold consultative meetings with the representatives of the financing governments and institutions participating in the project as and when required.

THE ROLE OF SUPERVISING INSTITUTIONS

17. The supervising institutions are those agencies which are directly associated with the practical execution of the project, i.e., ITU, ECA, PATU, UAPT, and URTNA. These agencies will be called to play an active role in the execution of the project and their staff members will assist the national Project Coordinators and other national experts in the carrying out field activities in particular as far as national level activities are concerned. The staff members of these agencies, in addition, will assume the responsibility of field supervision so as to ensure the compatibility of work being carried out in different countries in accordance with previously agreed norms. To this end, the IACC will allocate funds from the project budget to the associated agencies for a specifically agreed list of activities in the form of a sub-contract. The amount to be allocated shall be calculated on the extent and duration of the activity. The supervising agencies would disburse the earmarked funds according to the requirements of that portion of the project for which they are responsible and will be fully accountable.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROJECT OFFICE

18. A Project Office shall be established to undertake parts of the study and to ensure the day-to-day follow-up. This Office will be manned by a small team of internationally recruited experts for a fixed term. In the selection of the experts, special preference would be given to secure the services of competent Africans. The experts engaged for the implementation of the project will be recruited by the ITU on behalf of the IACC giving due consideration to the conditions of the financing institutions that provide the funds. The ITU will provide to Project Staff support facilities existing within the UNDP structure all over the African continent as well as resources such as computer facilities from its headquarters. In addition, the experts will benefit from the current privileges and immunities that are accorded to staff in the United Nations System for technical co-operation.

19. Consulting firms will be invited to make offers on the basis of invitations that will give full details of project activities as per the approved Terms of Reference for the Regional African Satellite Communication System. The Project Staff will evaluate the offers with due regard to the best combination of quality and price and submit its recommendations to the IACC via the Technical Committee for consideration and approval. The financing institutions and countries would then be informed of the final recommendation and their approval sought.

20. Once the contractor has been selected, the Project Staff will prepare the contract with the support of the ITU specialized agencies services (Technical Services, Legal Advisor, Selection Panel, and Contract Section).

21. The Project Staff will assume responsibility for establishing the norms for field work, guide and supervise the work of national and international experts involved in the study. It shall further compile and analyse reports from the field and draw up a comprehensive report giving all options so that the competent authorities obtain all relevant information for taking a firm decision on the implementation phase.

Participation of sponsoring countries (ADF) and financing institutions in project management

22. The IACC shall negotiate modalities of effective participation of the sponsoring countries and financing institutions in order to ensure the execution of the study as per the terms of reference and to achieve and overall objective of the project.

Project activities

23. The activities identified in each mode of telecommunications (broadcasting, public telecommunication, data, etc.) in various types of technologies (terrestrial, spatial) and incorporated in the Terms of Reference will be broken into a series of discrete work packages and will be carried out by national experts, internally required experts, and consulting firms on the basis of specific contracts. The activities will be undertaken at both the national and regional levels.

National level activities

24. The primary activity is to identify truly development oriented telecommunications service needs in each country. Each country shall extensively involve users to determine their requirements. It should approach the problem of access to telecommunication service not just from the conventional telephone/telex demand as perceived by the PTT authority, but also as felt by the overall national development authority in the form of infrastructural support to other activities. This would bring to the Study the cultural, economic and social breadth that it needs to satisfy the aspirations of the population of each country.

25. In order to achieve this objective, a multi-disciplinary team shall be established with the PTT as the focal point. It is also desirable that a national project coordinator be named so as to ensure effective follow-up at the national level and act as a contaact for relations with regional activities of the project.

26. The multidisciplinary team shall establish service requirements in accordance with the indications given in the "Guideline for the Preparation of a National-level Feasibility Study on a Regional African Satellite Communications System".

27. These Guidelines could be modified as required to meet the needs of individual countries; however, the general framework and service concept should be kept so as to fit within the regional framework.

28. Those countries which may need complementary external resources to carry out their national plans should be provided with certain inputs from the project.

29. Results of national-level activities will be documented in national feasibility study reports covering all relevant facets pertaining to the establishment of the Regional African Satellite Communication System. The studies shall extend to the level of outlining system layout solutions, assuring the project's viability and defining all critical elements so as to allow decisions to be taken on implementation.

30. The national feasibility studies will cover the following major areas:

- Examination of all relevant material, information, plans and projections available for the country as well as an assessment of demographic data and socio-economic parameters.

- National macro-economic analysis (general conditions and trends of the country).

- Study of the telecommunications sector.

- Identification of telecommunications sound and TV broadcasting requirements.

- Formulation of proposals for implementation.

- Financial and economic evaluation.

31. The ITU/UNDP have provided assistance to many countries in the elaboration of their master development plans. This occasion was used to provide on the job training to many staff members in the techniques of the elaboration of national plans. Accordingly maximum use would be made of the duly trained African Staff not only for the national level activities the framework of this study but also in carrying out studies in other African countries where the required expertise is not yet available.

32. The aim in each country should be to produce the optimal technical economic and financial solution for the total requirements of telecommunications services in order to support and enhance their socio economic development target. It is however essential that a uniform approach, documentation and presentation is adopted by the respective National Co-ordination Committees so as to have a compatible and complimentary regional scheme.

Regional Level Activities

33. The Regional African Satellite Communication System as a regional project requires, in addition to the national assessments, Africa-wide level activities on a great number of aspects.

34. The regional feasibility studies will use, to a certain degree, inputs from national studies. Although the specific requirements of individual countries will be taken into consideration, the regional aspect of the project will be highlighted.

35. The Interim Executive Committee, which preferably will be composed of the National Project Co-ordinators from all countries, will meet as often as necessary but at least once a year to examine IACC Progress Reports, make comments and observations that can be fully taken into consideration by the project execution team.

36. The regional feasibility study will include inter alia the following elements:

- Data base for the African Regional System;
- Telecommunication supply evaluation;
- Regional planning targets for telecommunications, sound and television broadcasting planning;

- Traffic distribution forecast between the terrestrial and satellite systems;

- Formulation of proposals for implementation;

- Financial and economic evaluation;

- Organization and management of the African Regional system.

37. Other members of the IACC may also be co-opted to assume or supervise a specific activity that may fall within their field of competence. In such a case, budgetary allocations would be made on the same basis as above.

Status of resource mobilization

38. The IACC has during the period under review been actively engaged in the definition of criteria for conditions of financing and the actual mobilization of resources and substantial progress has been achieved toward this end.

39. The Conference of Ministers in Resolution ECA/UNTACDA/83/Res.26 gave the following guidelines:

> Appeals to bilateral and multilateral financing institutions to work closely with the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee with a view to harmonizing their financial and technical contributions so as to benefit the whole of Africa in the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action and the global strategy of the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

40. In addition, the IACC adopted a Strategy on Mobilization of Resources which states:

- Feasibility study funds should essentially come from multilateral financing institutions with complementary funding from bilateral programmes.

- The IACC should be kept informed of any bilateral or multilateral financing of the project.

- The Feasibility Study funds should be sought from all possible sources so that many of them become partners in this large scale international endeavour.

41. The financing of the activities of the project wil be guided by the above given principles under the advisory services of the ADB as per the decision of the IACC.

42. The Chairman of the IACC is mandated to sign on behalf of the beneficiary countries for those funds that are put at the disposal of the IACC for the Feasibility Study.

43. The IACC shall designate one of the agencies as the custodian of the funds that are allocated to the IACC and their disbursement shall be effected in compliance with the authorization of the IACC for a specifically agreed set of activities. The agency that is so designated will be fully accountable for the funds and shall present a regular financial report and an externally audited final report to the IACC. The IACC approved financial report shall be forwarded to the funding institutions.

44. The funds that would be raised for the project will be used to finance the different activities described above and would consist of:

- meetings of the Interim Executive Committee, IACC and the IACC technical committee;

- staff put exclusively at the disposal of the project by the lead agency and the supervising institutions for clearly identified activities and supporting services;

- payments to be made to staff of the Project Office and consultants recruited for the execution of the project;

- incentive and compensatory payments for national experts and provision of limited facilities;

- logistic support for the activities of the project.

45. The search for sources of finance for the study was one of IACC's main assignments. Accordingly the IACC undertook the following activities:

- On 22 March,1985, IACC convened a meeting of financiers in Geneva which was attended by the following organizations and representatives from countries: The European Economic Community (EEC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), IBRD, Arab Legge, Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Sweden;

- the said meeting was followed by a joint session of the IACC bureau and the EEC in Bruxelles on 14th October 1985 for the discussion of the conditions of EEC's participation in the financing of the study.

Offers received by IACC

46. The current status of the mobilization of the required US$ 6 million for undertaking the study appears to be satisfactory. The following organizations have expressed their intention to participate in the financing of the study:

a) The UNDP has made a firm committment for US$ 400,000 and is considering the possibility of increasing this amount.

b) The ITU has made a firm committment to provide from its own resources the sum of $US 200,000. It is also considering the provision of additional resources in the form of computer facilities and other logistic support.

c) UNESCO has offered consultanty services up to US$ 15,000.

d) ADB has proposed to finance up to 95 per cent of the cost of the study from its Technical Assistance Account under the following condition:

- a loan will be granted to at least two African countries of which at least one is eligible for ADF loan;

- this loan will be without charge and interest;

- the period of repayment is 50 years with grace period of ten years if the project is viable and 45 years if the study proves that the project is not viable.

It is expected that some African governments will take the necessary measures in order to request a loan from the African Development Fund for the benefit of the continent as a whole. The borrowing countries shall be granted a specific role in the organizational structure of the study according to an agreement to be worked out between those countries, ADF and IACC.

(e) The European Economic Community has confirmed its willingness to provide financing for the study in the form of a grant under the following conditions:

- that the OAU assume on its own, or through PATU «the role of directing and execution of the study». If OAU does not have necessary expertise the European Commission «would be prepared to make available independent experts to assist with this task»;

- ITU can be the OAU's adviser on all important technical and financial aspects of the study;

- the execution of the study shall be «.... directly contracted (by the European Commission) to a grouping of consultancy firms and experts from ACP/EEC countries ...»;

- the other members of the IACC and other groupings could continue to follow the execution of the study in the form of an Advisory Committee.

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATION OF THE IACC ON THE FINANCIAL OFFERS RECEIVED

47. The offers of UNDP, ITU and UNESCO should be accepted with appreciation as they are untied and are given in the form of a grant.

48. The fact that certain African countries are likely to graciously consent to procure a loan from the African Development Fund and put at the disposal of Africa as a whole should be accepted because the utilization of the funds is untied and its repayment condition is soft and attractive.

49. Although EEC's offer of a grant is to be appreciated, the conditions of the grant are considered to be too restrictive for the following reasons:

- only ACP/EEC consultants and experts would be directly recruited by the Community for execution of the study; and

- that the full competence and know-how of the members of the IACC are not utilized for the direction and supervision of the study.

50. Furthermore, the conditions may be prejudicial to the implementation phase which should be carried out as a result of open international competitive bidding. This is even more so when the PAN-African Scope of the study and its very important economic, technical and political implications are taken into account.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

51. The IACC has undertaken a series of activities within the mandate given to it by the Conference of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning in order to carry out this important study with as much objectivity and neutrality

as possible. The IACC has consistantly kept in mind the important objectives of the study, namely, the utilization of African expertise and the creation of conditions for the transfer of technical know-how to individual countries and their regional organizations. In order to complete this assignment in an optimum way the IACC makes the following recommendations:

1. African countries should individually and collectively continue to give a high priority to this project and take an active and concerted part in its implementation;

2. African countries should continue to harmonize their activities so as to carry out a single integrated study with the view of achieving a comprehensive and viable telecommunications network to help realize the goals and objectives of the African Economic Community as per the Lagos Plan ofAction;

3. considering its role in the overall development process and more particularly in the field of telecommunications development and also its generous provision of funds, UNDP should be included in the IACC as a member and it should be requested to examine ways and means to increase its contribution to the maximum extent possible;

4. the IACC should continue its negotiation with the European Economic Community with the view of obtaining better and more flexible conditions of financing;

5. Member countries should be invited to apply for a loan form the Technical Assistance Account of the African Development Fund for the partial or full financing of the study;

6. that all concerned parties shall do their utmost in order to complete the study as soon as possible but not later than the beginning of 1988.